

4. How do Parliamentary Debates Work?

1 Parliament is perhaps the most obvious example of where formal debates take place in the UK today. Ask your students what they know about debates in Parliament. They may find it useful to consider the following questions:

- Who takes part in a debate in Parliament?
- Who chairs these debates?
- What sort of issues are debated?
- What happens in a debate?
- How are decisions made at the end of a debate?

After discussing these questions, you may wish to show your students this [short video from UK Parliament](#) which provides information on parliamentary debate.

2 Show your students an extract from either a live or a recorded debate in the House of Commons and get them to jot down and then discuss anything they notice.

3 Debates can be watched on [Parliament TV](#). Alternatively, you can find examples on You Tube. When selecting a suitable debate to watch you might find it useful to choose a debate in which:

- The students are likely to recognise the MPs who are speaking. You might choose to watch a debate that your local MP is taking part in.
- A topic is being debated which will be of interest to your students. For example, you might choose to watch a debate about education, university tuition fees or the environment.

4 Show your students the [House of Commons rules of behaviour](#). Explain that this leaflet, which was published in September 2021, is available online and sets out the rules for behaviour in the House of Commons.

Ask students to look through the leaflet and answer the following questions:

- How do MPs have to address/refer to other people in Parliament?
- How are people expected to behave when an MP is speaking?

